



**COUNTY OF PLACER
FISH & GAME COMMISSION**

**Ed King
Deputy Agricultural Commissioner
County Contact**

FISH & GAME COMMISSION MEMBERS

DISTRICT 1 Don Gould	DISTRICT 2 Mark Fowler
DISTRICT 3 Gregg McKenzie	DISTRICT 4 Gary Flanagan
DISTRICT 5 Kari Freidig	DISTRICT 5 Marc Wyatt
DISTRICT 5 Mickey Daniels	

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**PLACER COUNTY
FISH & GAME COMMISSION
MINUTES**

TIME/DATE: 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, April 22, 2015
LOCATION: PLACER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING ROOM
Community Development Resource Agency, DeWitt Center, Auburn
3091 County Center Drive (corner of Bell Road and Richardson
Drive)

The Placer County Fish & Game Commission is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided the resources to participate fully in its public meetings. If you are hearing impaired, we have listening devices available. If you require additional disability-related modifications or accommodations, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the Recording Secretary at (530) 889-7372. If requested, the agenda shall be provided in appropriate alternative formats to persons with disabilities. All requests must be received at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting for which you are requesting accommodation. Requests received after such time will be accommodated only if time permits.

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Marc Wyatt, Vice Chair
- II. ROLL CALL**
Present: Daniels, Gould, Wyatt, Fowler, Flanagan, Freidig
Absent: McKenzie
- III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA for April 22, 2015 and APPROVAL OF MINUTES for February 25, 2015**
Agenda: Daniels/Freidig/MPUV
Minutes: Fowler/Flanagan/MPUV
- IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**
Individuals may address the Commission on items under the jurisdiction of the Fish & Game Commission not included on this agenda for no longer than five (5) minutes. ***No action can be taken on items addressed under Public Comment***

None

V. FINANCIAL REPORT – Ed King

Expenditures through March 31, for FY 14/15 total \$7,513.30 including \$990.00 in commissioner's fees, \$970.64 in mileage reimbursement, and \$5,000.00 in grant awards. Budgeted expenditures for the remainder of the fiscal year total \$2,856.70.

Revenues through March 31, total \$1,643.49, including \$970.11 in fines, \$582.98 in penalty assessments and \$90.40 in interest. Fine and penalty assessment revenue for \$5,200.00 is budgeted for fine, penalty assessment and interest revenue for the fiscal year.

VI. AGENCY REPORTS

A. Commission Updates

Freidig contacted Supervisor Montgomery about meeting formally with the courts about Fish & Game fines. Supervisor Montgomery has already met informally but intends to hold a formal meeting. Freidig reported a positive response with the initial meeting.

Gould reminded everyone that the Placer Sportsmen's 68th annual Kids Fish Derby is Saturday, April 25, from sunrise until 10:30.

The Central Sierra Commission is meeting on May 16 in El Dorado Hills. Commissioners Wyatt and Flanagan are unable to go but hope that someone else can, and report to this Commission.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Big Game Management Account advisory committee is meeting in May and Flanagan expects to attend. He asked the group to take a look at the list of proposals for projects seeking funding, and if anyone had any questions or comments, to email them to him. Freidig said that she looked at it and will write out those proposals she feels are promising. There is a proposed study on fences and whether they're hurting or helping the black-tailed deer population. Another proposal is to restore habitat for deer after the Rush fire. Freidig was concerned about the costs of the California Hunter Survey. She stated that items like new laptops, hotels, and food were charged to the survey, which cost in total over \$159,000. Gould said that the Hunter Survey consisted of a sheet of paper included with hunting tags mailed out to hunters.

B. State Wildlife Conservation Board Subcommittee – Gregg McKenzie

None

C. State Fish & Game Commission Subcommittee – Mark Fowler

Fowler reported that new bag limits for sport fishing have been adopted: a fall run Chinook quota, bag and possession limit for the Klamath River; and an increase of the possession limit from two to four salmon for the Central Valley.

DFW is accepting applications for deer and pig hunting permits in Merced County. Online applications are available, and the closing date is July 3rd.

All fishing on the Sacramento River is closed 650 feet below Keswick Dam to the Hwy 44 bridge to protect winter-run Chinook.

Annual general trout season begins on Saturday, April 25.

The commission is urging efforts to control rodents by using natural methods versus poison. Population increase in the spring, and natural predators should be allowed time to take care of them.

The California Duck Stamp Art Contest runs May 1 through June 3 this year; the subject is the green-winged teal.

The commission is looking to hold public hearings on a public land pass program change, and is meeting in April to discuss.

There's a reward of \$10-\$50 for returning tags from north coast salmon and steelhead. 4,500 fish have been tagged.

Fisheries report a positive outlook on the ocean salmon season. The Sacramento River fall Chinook run was 650,000, and the run on the Klamath River was over 400,000.

The flat-tailed horned lizard has been accepted for consideration for listing as an endangered species.

Fowler said he performed a ride-along in February with Lt. Lawson and Capt. Jeter, which was very quiet; they only saw one vehicle which checked out OK.

D. California Department of Fish & Wildlife - Lt. John Lawson

This year's turkey season is quiet, and hunters report little success. One theory is that the drought has made vegetation shorter, so predators can see the turkeys better.

This year has seen an increase in bear problems. Lt. Lawson described an incident in Nevada County in which a bear broke into a cabin and was living there with her cubs. The homeowner shot and killed a sow and the mother with one shot. The surviving cub was 60 to 70 pounds, deemed large enough to live on its

own. The two dead bears were taken to the lab for necropsy. The survivor was hazed and has not returned, but they expect it will. The hope is that continued hazing will discourage the cub, but unfortunately the mother, by breaking into and living in the cabin, has taught the cub that it's a good way to find food.

Freidig stated that sixty pounds didn't sound like it was very big for a bear, and wondered what criteria were used for determining whether a cub was old enough to live without its mother. Lt. Lawson stated that he understands that they have to have basic threshold standards to make an estimate on survivability.

The Bear League's Ann Bryant reported that someone left a cub on her doorstep. She contacted DFW who rushed the cub to region, but the current status of the cub is unknown.

Lt. Lawson reported on the dredge mining issue. He stated that the judge in the lawsuit might end up siding with the miners, but at this time, his agency is still enforcing the department's ban on dredging by conducting field interviews, taking evidence photos, and referring offenders to the DA's office. They are not issuing citations nor confiscating field equipment.

DFW anticipates the drought it will affect bears, who will come to lower elevations. The low water levels will also make the water temperature hot for fish.

Freidig asked if allowing dredging would be bad for the fish by mucking up the water. Lt. Lawson explained that there are different viewpoints about dredging, and in fact many nutrients are released from disturbing the river sediment. Dredging seasons generally don't conflict with fish breeding.

E. Nevada Irrigation District - Sue Sindt and Rem Scherzinger

Rem Scherzinger, General Manager of NID, presented an update on the status of the Hemphill Dam salmon restoration project. He said that NID had met several times with National Marine Fisheries Service and DFW already to discuss the facility, and plans are evolving. NID had placed a bumper in 2013 and 2014, but they're not sure if it's working, and DFW doesn't want them to reinstall it.

NID has concluded negotiations with the Foothills Water Network about water rights involving Hemphill. They've written letters to request assistance from the State Water Resources Control Board.

Last year, NID tried to get a streambed alteration permit from DFW, but it's been suspended until NID can resolve certain issues. NID has issued an RFP for engineering services to determine what needs to be done to improve fish passage as much as possible. Scherzinger warned that it will take a while but they are committed to making the project work.

Fowler asked about the timeline involved, and asked for more specific dates. Scherzinger replied that it will take years because of competing interests and approval requirements; however, NID is committed to making Hemphill as fish friendly as possible and are willing to consider any option. Scherzinger mentioned that they know that some fish have been getting over the dam.

Wyatt commented that it was a shame to have to jump through so many hoops to try to get something done that wasn't going to alter the ravine very much. Scherzinger replied that they just wanted to be able to move three large rocks to help fish passage, but that Jennifer Nguyen with DFW denied their request.

Flanagan asked why NID submitted their last 1602 permit. Scherzinger replied that it was a request to enter the creek, perform maintenance on the facility, and move the three rocks. The rocks are in a position right now that hampers fish movement during low water flow periods; NID hoped to be able to move the rocks into a position that would encourage fish to move toward the easier route. Flanagan said that he understood that SARSAS believed that NID was going to correct the parts of the permit that DFW didn't like, then resubmit it before the October deadline. Scherzinger stated that that was incorrect; there are no portions of the permit that can be changed. Flanagan asked who determines if a CEQA document is necessary. Scherzinger stated that NID determines that. Flanagan asked if NID would be willing to build a fishway, or allowing a nonprofit to come in and build it. Scherzinger said that NID had no objections.

Flanagan asked if it was true that there are only three NID customers getting water via the Hemphill dam. Scherzinger said he didn't know offhand, but it was likely.

Jim Haufler, SARSAS volunteer, stated that it was true there were only three customers, but that two of them are Turkey Creek golf course and the Lincoln Crossing Community Association. Haufler pointed out that SARSAS agrees that the public's need for water is just as valid as the fishes'.

Wyatt asked if the rocks NID wants to move are natural. Scherzinger said no; they were originally placed when the dam was built, and they were able to submit the work permit request as maintenance to the existing facility; otherwise, they would have been turned down outright.

Wyatt asked Scherzinger to give any future updates on Hemphill to Sue Sindt to report to the Commission. Scherzinger stated that he would be willing to come back when NID has a plan set in place.

Hiram Gorey, a local resident, stated that NID had already performed CEQA and NEPA studies as part of their FERC licensing, and they ignored his request to

include an additional part of Auburn Ravine to evaluate potential effects. Gorey stated that he doesn't believe the approvals take as long as Scherzinger claims they do.

Wyatt stated that this meeting is not a forum for debate; NID was invited to present to the Commission, and their representative should not be challenged.

Haufler stated that he understood that the reason that DFW declined the permit was because they didn't want any partial measures attempted; they wanted any work to be complete and comprehensive.

Freidig asked what the big deal was about moving three boulders. Scherzinger confirmed that DFW felt that it would be a partial fix to the problem, and acknowledged that they have to obey strict regulations that perhaps the public don't fully understand.

Flanagan asked if NID would be willing to transport fish above the dam, possibly by trucking them up. Scherzinger replied that NID would be willing to discuss the feasibility.

Scott Johnson, former board member for SARSAS, asked if NID would be willing to install fish screens to prevent smolt from going into the diversions. Scherzinger replied that NID will do what is needed to ensure fish passage.

Freidig asked why NID wouldn't just let volunteers onto their property to help the fish. Scherzinger stated that it would present liability issues. Scherzinger stated that if a regulatory entity trained in the proper methods were to come in to move the fish, there wouldn't be a problem, but asking NID to do it raises a lot of issues.

Robert Hane of SARSAS stated that he met NID engineers Doug Hopper and Mr. King about a month ago, and he had tried to acquaint them with Damion Ciotti, from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service who has a lot of expertise in dam removal and fish passage. Hane asked if NID would consider meeting Ciotti and discussing what he had to offer them. Hane said he contacted NID with this proposal, and asked Scherzinger if he had gotten the message. Scherzinger said he did get the message, and had already met with Ciotti and the United Auburn Indian Community. Ciotti has been given grant money which he is willing to use to assist NID with the project. Scherzinger stated that the project now just needs to be defined.

Sue Sindt presented the results of the April 1st snow survey. This is the worst year on record, with 1.5 inches of water content, which is 4% of the average. The second worst year was 1934, which measured 9.7 inches; the third worst was 1977, with 11.7 inches. Current storage levels are 113% of average, and NID expects to draw from storage sooner in the year than normal. They also expect

that storage will dip below the target carryover level of 110,000 acre feet this year, unless they can offset it by purchasing water from PG&E and conservation.

Water reduction mandate changes come from the Governor's office so quickly it's hard to keep customers up to date. Treated water customers most recently are being asked for a 36% reduction in water use, but a final determination will be made May 6. Agricultural reduction is still voluntary at this time, but they're being asked for a 25% reduction.

Flanagan said, "Shame they don't have some emergency contingencies that prevent the agricultural interests from just taking and selling their water down south. It would be nice to be able to keep it up here in this type of particular scenario." Sindt stated that it's a common belief that our water goes south, but it stays here. Gould asked if NID was planning on creating new reservoirs. Sindt stated that plans are in place for the creation of Parker Reservoir on Bear River. Gould asked if reservoirs could be built off stream. Sindt replied that they could, but it depends on the geography.

NON-ACTION ITEMS

VII. Placer County Fisheries Update – Mitch Lockhart, District Fisheries Biologist – Eldorado, Nevada & Placer Counties, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Lockhart announced that the plan is to have the American River hatchery offline this summer. They were able to keep chilled holding tanks available, and were able to increase the number of sub-catchable fish from last year.

Freidig asked Lockhart to define sub-catchable. Lockhart explained that within the hatchery system, there are three size classes: fingerlings, catchable (large enough to legally catch, 2 to 4 fish per pound), and sub-catchable (larger fish that still need to grow, ten per pound or smaller). Lockhart stated that things will be dire later in the season.

Lockhart stated that rainbow catchables have taken about a 50% hit, but Kokanee should be at the same stock as last year. Lockhart stated that they have been receiving calls that fish have been spotted at Tahoe City.

Lockhart commented that the drought means water flow from Lake Tahoe is reduced earlier in the season, and that he's been monitoring streams already. He described a fish rescue incident that happened last week at Tahoe City when fish became stranded in a shrinking water pool. Trout Unlimited came to assist and they succeeded in moving via hook and line 30 of the estimated 40 trapped fish into Lake Tahoe at Obexer's in Homewood, which also aided the remaining fish. Lockhart praised community support but added that other fish rescues are likely this season.

Freidig asked if they used a barbless hook, and Lockhart confirmed. Lockhart commented that the most successful fly used was one that looked like a fish pellet.

Daniels asked if any of the fish were tagged, and Lockhart confirmed. Daniels asked if they collected data, and Lockhart stated that they had to move quickly and were unable to take scale samples. Lockhart stated that the rescue range for fish was between 17 and 32 inches, probably up to 8 pounds.

Freidig asked the average age of the fish, and Lockhart responded that it was difficult to tell, but they were several years old, and if he had to guess, around 5+ years.

Flanagan asked if problems were anticipated with wild stock. Lockhart replied that they do, and that they've been monitoring sites.

Daniels said that he's impressed with their work, and Lockhart replied that he was pleased with the results, and that they were grateful for Trout Unlimited's help.

Gould asked about the fish allotment for the Fish Derby. Lockhart thought that the allotment had been canceled, but it turned out that it had been taken care of.

ACTION ITEMS

- VIII. Bear Education-Outreach Video** – Consider requesting the Board of Supervisors support production of a short video intended to inform citizens on how to live safely with bears and access county services for assistance with bear related issues.

King reported that county departments including Agriculture, Environmental Utilities and the Public Information Office are discussing production of a short video to educate the public about living safely with bears. A letter of support addressed to the Board of Supervisors was prepared in advance of the meeting for the Commission to approve.

Wyatt asked how the County would promote the video. King replied that the Public Information Office would be in charge of promotion.

Wyatt asked for clarification on the Commission's role. King said that the Commission could provide input regarding content. The involved departments are meeting on Monday to brainstorm the video's creation.

Fowler stated that alerting Placer County public on bear issues would be helpful.

Gould stated that the video could be played on the City of Roseville's public access.

Flanagan made a motion to approve the letter of support as written, Freidig seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

King suggested that the Commission be involved with creating the video and appoint a subcommittee. Freidig stated that she would be available; Daniels made the motion to approve Freidig as the Commission's representative for the bear video, and Gould seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Lt. Lawson added that he recommended Sara Holm as DFW liaison, since it's a wildlife management issue.

Daniels reported that former Commissioner Matt Bailey recently passed away, and asked members to please sign the sympathy card he brought.

IX. Next Meeting Date
May 27, 2015 at 6:00 PM.

X. Adjournment
7:35 PM